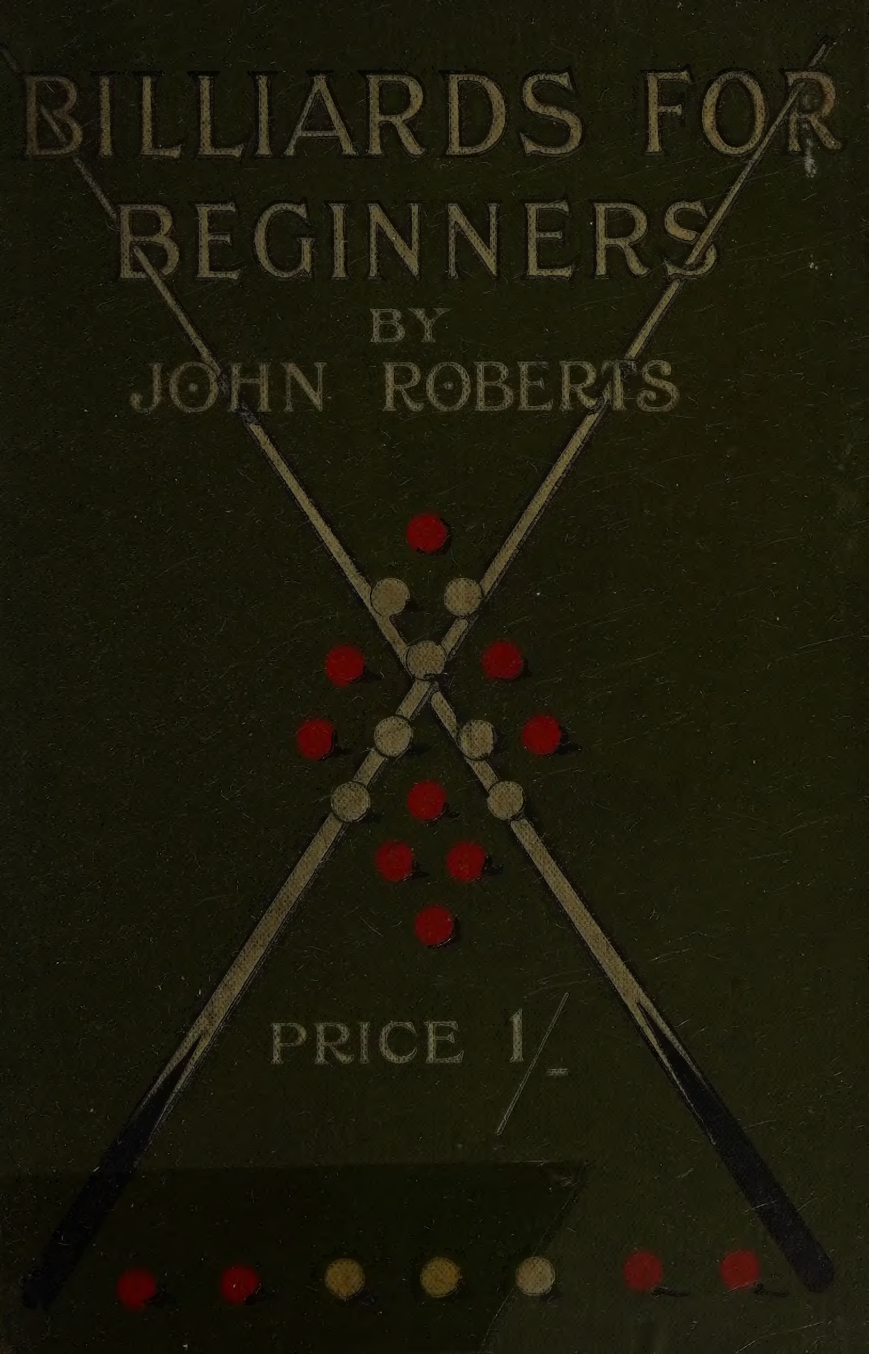
BILLIARDS FOR BEGINNERS

BY

JOHN ROBERTS



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BILLIARDS FOR BEGINNERS

By
JOHN ROBERTS
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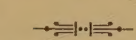
PREFACE



THIS little book is a reprint of a series of articles contributed to "The Billiard Review" by Mr. John Roberts. It is designed principally for the instruction of beginners, but "Rule of Thumb" players of a larger growth would doubtless derive much benefit from a study of it. The measurements are in every case taken from the edge of the cushion to the centre of the ball. The cushions and pockets are numbered from the left facing baulk, the baulk cushion being No. 1 and the bottom left-hand cushion No. 2.

THE EDITOR.

BILLIARDS FOR BEGINNERS

IT having been represented to me that the instructions in my book, *The Game of Billiards, and How to Play It*, are too advanced for an absolute beginner, I have thought it advisable to supplement them by a short series of articles, which I hope will fill the gap.

At the outset let me warn beginners against trying to travel too fast. A solid foundation can only be acquired by diligently practising the elementary strokes until they can be made with absolute certainty, and, in my opinion, it will be the height of foolishness for any one using this series of lessons to leave a stroke and pass on to the next without fully mastering it.

The first thing for a beginner to do is to learn how to stand when delivering his stroke, and as this series is to be strictly elementary I think that the best plan, instead of my confusing the novice with written and pictured directions, would be to direct him to stroll into a public room which is in charge of a marker who can play decently

and carefully watch his attitudes, concentrating the attention first upon the manner in which he makes a stroke when playing from baulk. It must be borne in mind, however, that what would be an easy and correct attitude for one man would not be so for another, as much depends upon the player's stature, length of leg, and reach. The beginner will, however, have little difficulty in adopting a playing attitude to suit himself after observing fairly good players in the way I recommend.

The next thing, or the thing I should say to be acquired simultaneously, is the proper way to hold the cue and to deliver the stroke. This is, perhaps, the most important step in acquiring a knowledge of billiards, and the beginner should on no account rest satisfied until he has got into a proper style.

Do not on any account grip the cue tightly. It should be held loosely, resting on the fingers, the hand being about three or four inches from the butt. There are occasions, as, for instance, in screwing a ball, when it is necessary to grip the cue, but the beginner need not worry about this. He will find as he progresses that he will grip the cue unconsciously when it is necessary to do so.

For ordinary strokes, the cue should be held so that there is about a foot of it between the ball and the bridge, but the beginner should commence with half this distance, and gradually increase it as he gains facility in striking a ball truly, and at the same time with force.

A mistake which nineteen out of every twenty beginners make is to deliver the cue from the elbow instead of from the shoulder, and stabbing or digging at the ball instead of striking it evenly.

It is of the utmost importance that the cue should not be drawn back directly after making a stroke. On the contrary, it should follow the ball a little.

The first stroke for practice is that shown in Diagram No. I. It is designed to teach the beginner how to strike a ball truly in the centre.

Place the spot ball on the centre spot of the D, so that the spot on the ball is truly in the centre of the ball as seen from baulk, and is moreover in a line with the small ivory spot on the bottom cushion rail. The red and white balls should be placed one on either side of this ivory spot, about two inches apart—that is, not far enough apart to permit of a ball going between them without touching both. These two balls should not be close up to the cushion. Now hold the cue so that while the tip is pointing straight at the spot on the ball on the baulk line, the part which crosses the cushion rail is directly over the ivory spot in the rail. Then endeavour to strike the ball directly on the spot so that it will travel up the table over the table spots, strike the top cushion, and returning make the cannon. The stroke should be made with moderate strength at first, but the ball should be hit harder and harder as proficiency is attained, until the cannon

can be made when you strike the ball as hard as you are able.

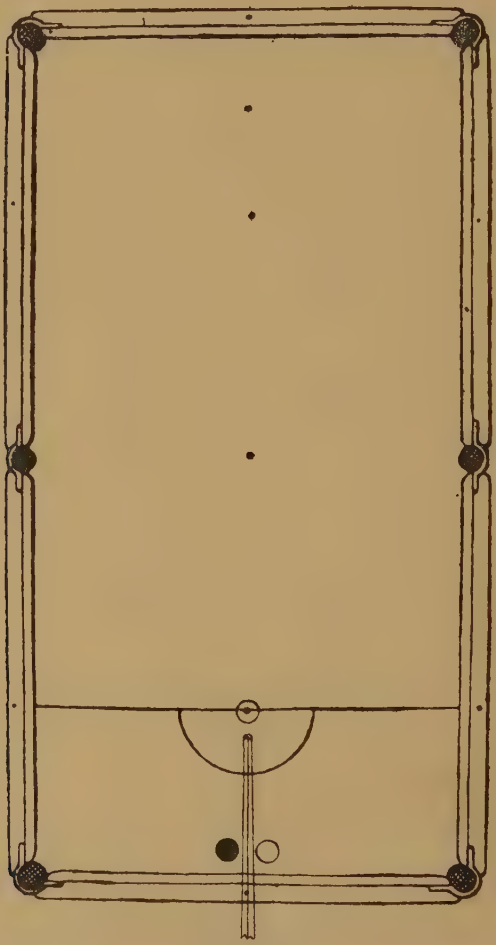


DIAGRAM I.

As further practice in striking a ball truly, the

learner should now try the strokes illustrated in Diagrams II. and III. They require no description beyond the statement that in these strokes the main thing is that the cue ball should strike the red ball truly—that is, at a point in a direct line with the pocket. This can, of course, be done if the cue ball is not struck truly, but the beginner must endeavour to strike it with precision for all that. When proficiency has been attained at these strokes, the novice must go on to those shown in Diagrams IV. and V. These strokes are intended to illustrate the fact that a ball striking a cushion will, on coming away from it, providing, of course, that no side has been used, travel along a line drawn at the same angle (for practical purposes) as that upon which it travelled in its passage to the cushion.

In playing the stroke illustrated in Diagram IV. the cue ball should strike the cushion at a point just in front of the ivory spot on the top cushion rail, and in Diagram V. at a point half way between the two pockets. In playing at a cushion at an angle the player should aim not at the point he wishes his ball to strike, but about an inch in front of it. It is not necessary to go into the reason of this here.

Having by this time learned to strike a ball correctly, the novice can go on to the simplest form of losing hazard, viz., the half-ball loser. It will be observed, if the balls are placed as shown in Diagrams

VI. and VII., that the centre of the cue ball is in a direct line with the outside edge of the object ball.

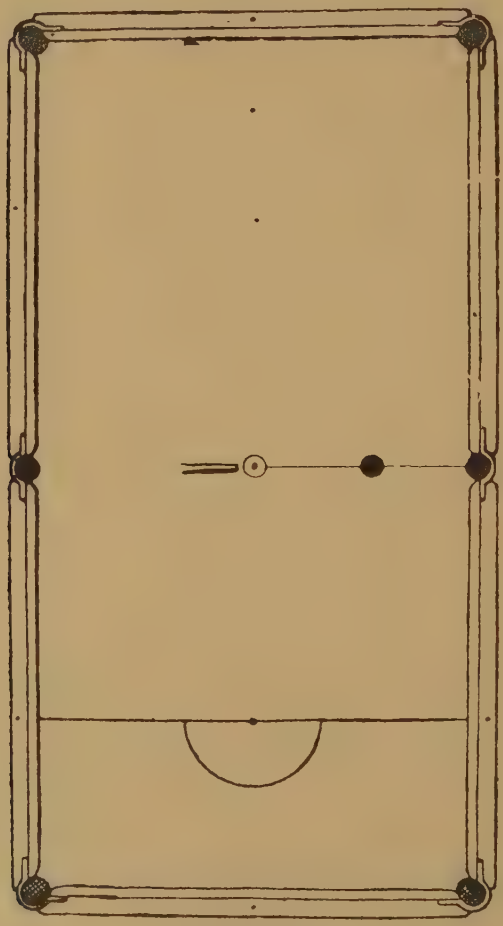


DIAGRAM II.

All that is necessary to do to make the hazard is to

strike the cue ball fairly in the centre with moderate strength, aiming at the edge of the object ball. This

DIAGRAM III.

stroke can be practised for the present without any

reference to what becomes of the object ball, but as the beginner progresses he will find that in a game

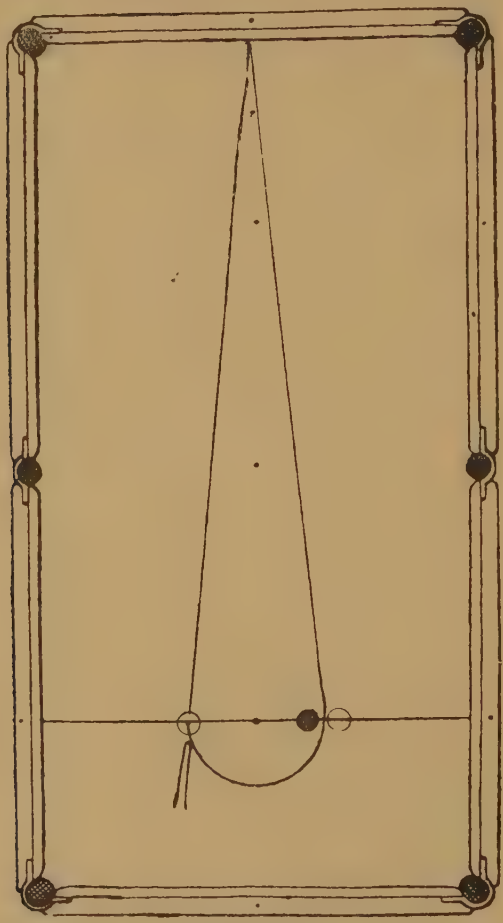


DIAGRAM IV.

a great deal will sometimes depend upon his ability

to strike the object ball (Diagram VI.) so that it will return off the top cushion to nearly the same

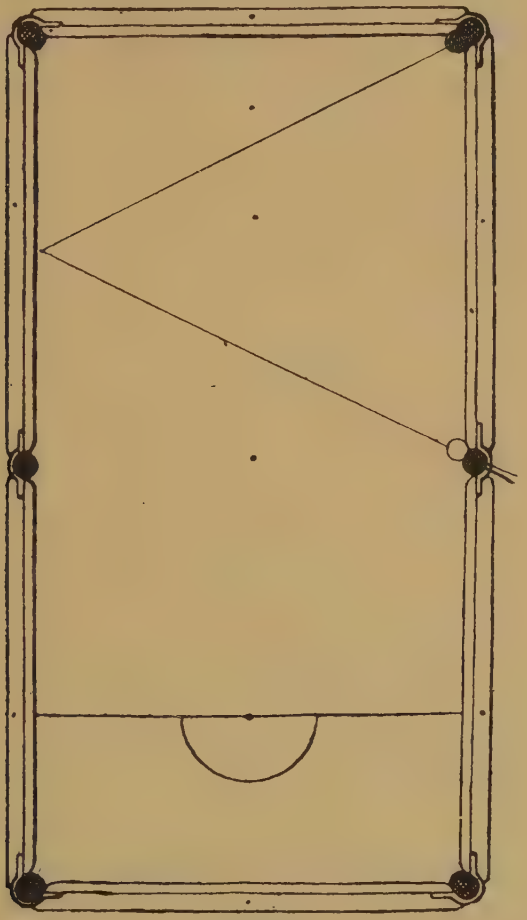


DIAGRAM V.

position as before. At this stage, howeve_, it is only

necessary to direct the attention to putting the cue ball into the pocket.

A similar stroke can be made if the centre of the cue ball is in other positions along the lines AB or CB, but for the present the learner had better confine himself to making the stroke from the pocket ends of the line.

The importance of these two strokes cannot be over - estimated, and they should be assiduously practised, that in Diagram No. VI. being played from the same position on the other side of the table also.

Another one of these simple strokes for practice is that shown in Diagram VIII. The object here is not only to make the losing hazard, which is very easy, but to bring the red ball down to the neighbourhood of the pyramid spot, and the stroke should be practised until this can be done, the red travelling all the time in the centre line of the table.

Still another is shown in Diagram IX., the object here being to take the red up over No. 4 pocket.

Yet another is illustrated in Diagram X.

Diagram XI. shows a stroke which should be played a little harder than the preceding ones, which are all to be played at soft strength.

In this case, the object should be to make the red to travel up and down the table as near the centre line as possible.

Diagram No. XII. shows a longer hazard than the

others, and therefore perhaps a trifle more difficult,

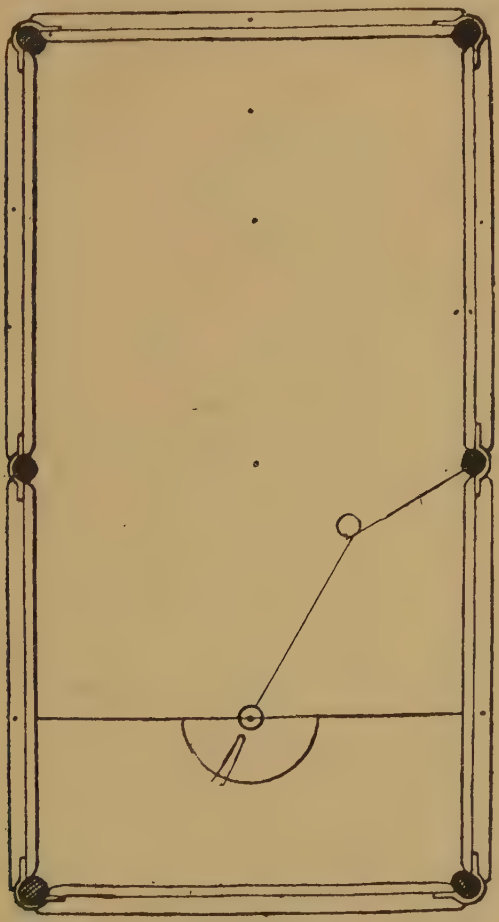


DIAGRAM VI.

CUE BALL.—On spot at centre of D.
OBJECT BALL.—61½ in. from No. 1 cushion, and 18½ in. from No. 6 cushion.

but it is still very easy. All these hazards should

be assiduously practised, for they are most important. Do not be satisfied until you have brought the red

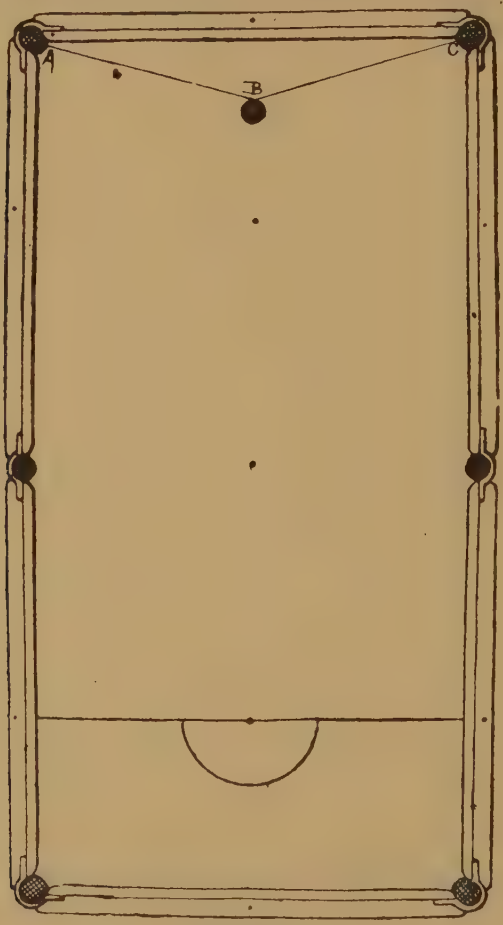


DIAGRAM VII.

ball into something like the position indicated.

Pleasant, and at the same time very useful, practice

DIAGRAM VIII.

RED.—On spot.
WHITE.—29 in. from 4, and 25 in. from 3 cushion.

is afforded by the series of half-ball cannons shown

in Diagrams XIII. to XVIII. The beginner should

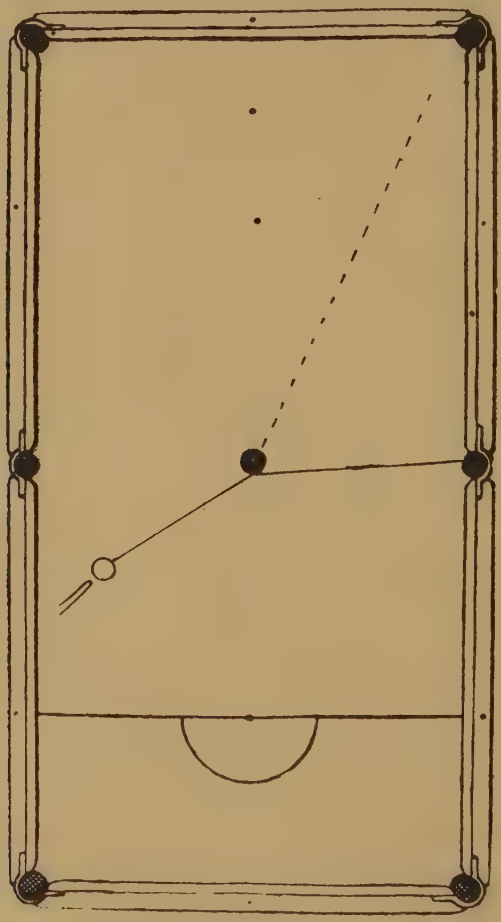


DIAGRAM IX.

RED.—On centre spot.
WHITE.—11 in. from No. 2 cushion, and 53 in. from No. 1 cushion.

practise these strokes until he can make them with-

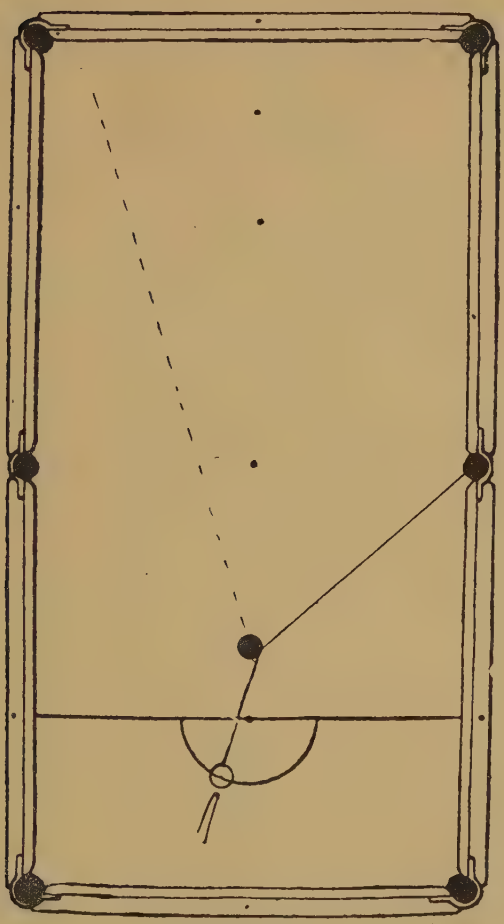


DIAGRAM X.

RED.—41 in. from No. 1 cushion, in the centre line of the table.

CUE.—On the baulk semicircle, right behind a spot on the baulk line, 7 in. from the left spot of the D.

out once failing. The only thing to remember is that

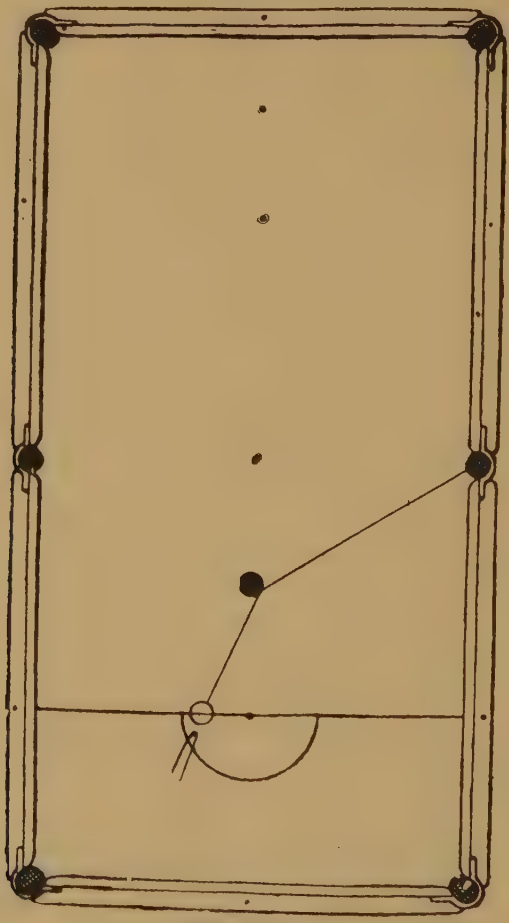


DIAGRAM XI.

RED.—50 in. from No. 1 cushion, in the centre line of the table.
CUE.—8 in. from the left-hand spot of the D, and on the baulk line.

the cue ball should be struck fairly in the centre and

that the aim must be at the edge of the first object

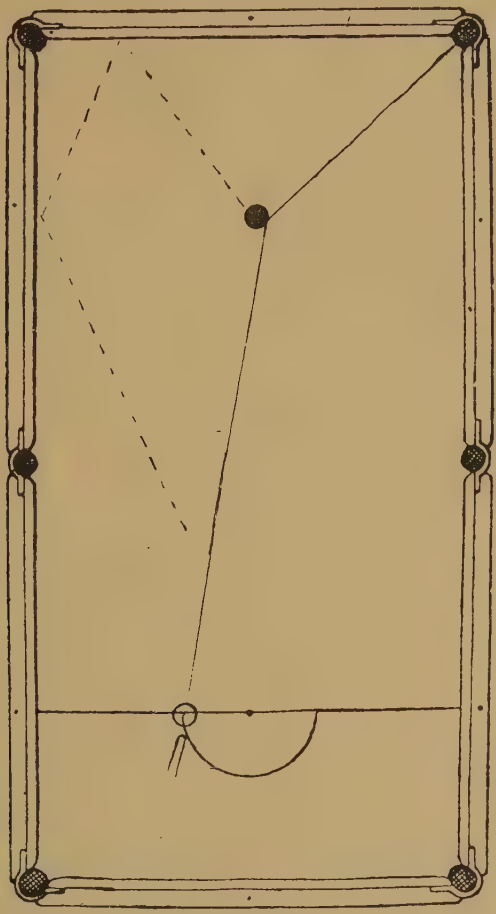


DIAGRAM XII.

RED.—On pyramid spot.
WHITE.—Left-hand spot in baulk.

ball, which will not be found difficult, as, if the cue is

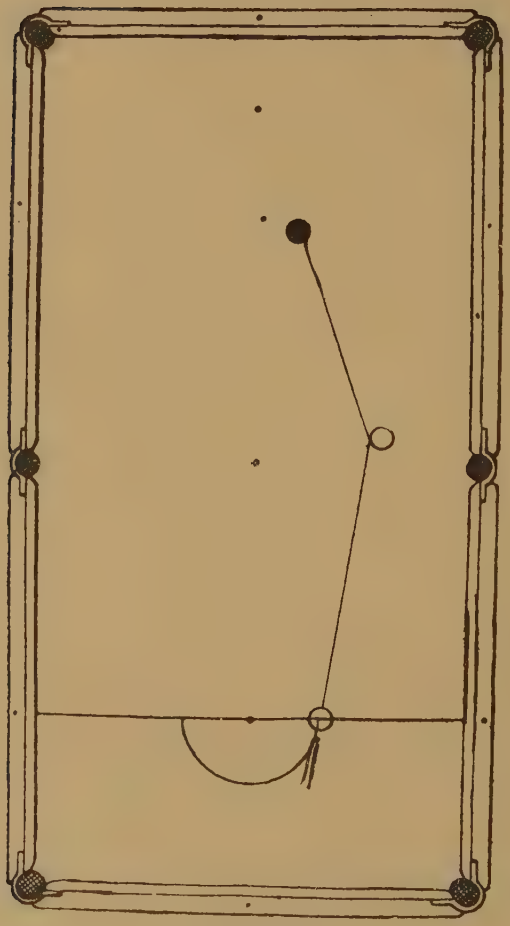


DIAGRAM XIII.

RED.—33¼ in. from 4 cushion and 30½ in. from 5 cushion.
WHITE.—69½ in. from 4 cushion and 14 in. from 5 cushion.
CUE.—On right spot of D.

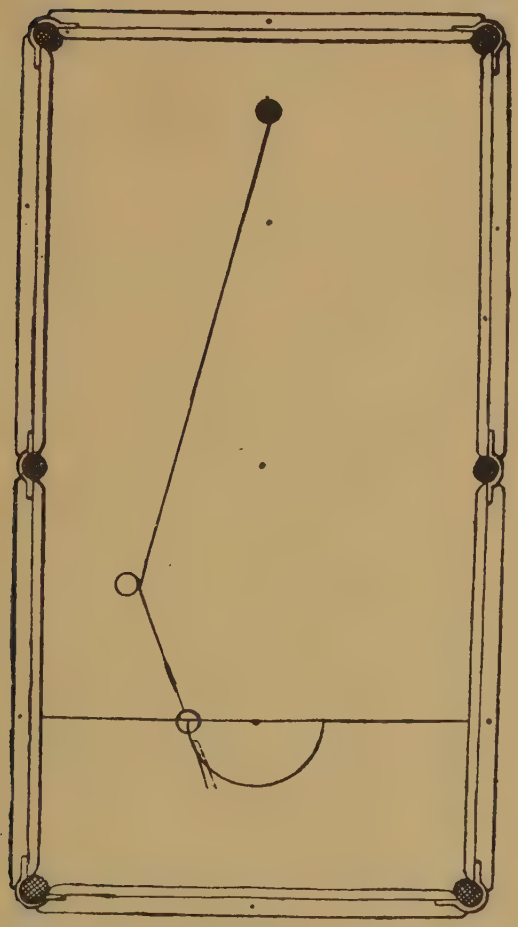


DIAGRAM XIV.

RED.—On spot.
WHITE.—50½ in. from 1 cushion and 13½ in. from 2 cushion.
CUE.—On left spot of D.

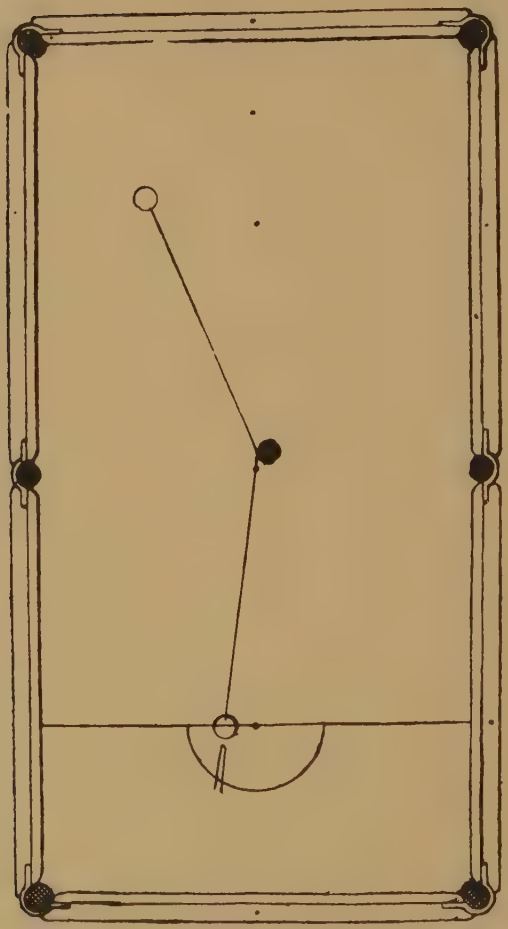


DIAGRAM XV.

RED.—37½ in. from 3 cushion and 70 in. from 4 cushion.
WHITE.—17 in. from 3 cushion and 26½ in. from 4 cushion.
CUE.—5½ in. from left spot of D.

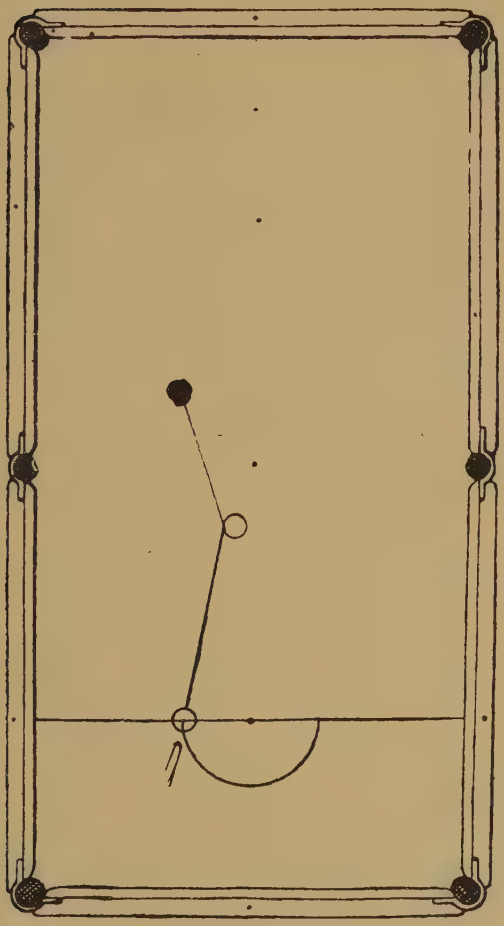


DIAGRAM XVI.

RED.—23¼ in. from 3 cushion and 60 in. from 4 cushion.
WHITE.—32½ in. from 2 cushion and 61 in. from 1 cushion.
CUE.—Left spot of D.

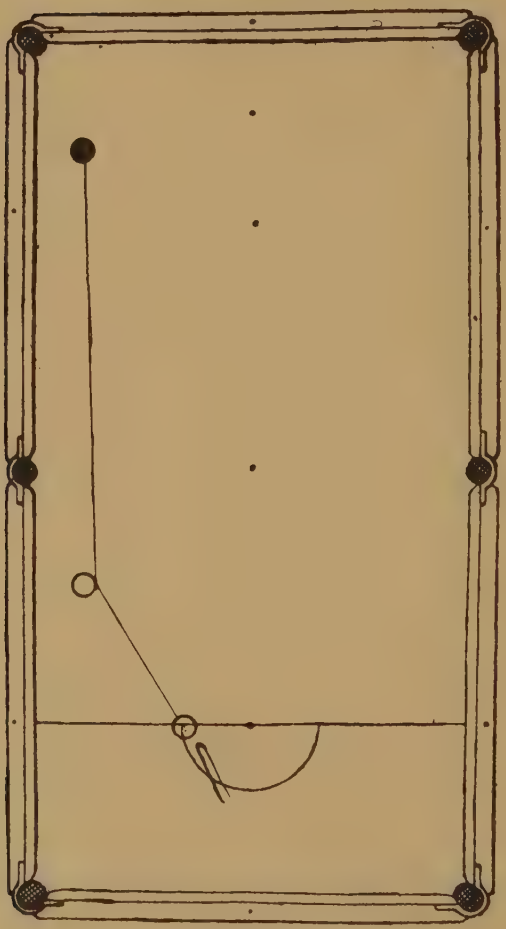


DIAGRAM XVII.

RED.—6 in. from 3 cushion and 18 in. from 4 cushion.
WHITE.—51 in. from 1 cushion and 7 in. from 2 cushion.
CUE.—Left spot of D.
It is necessary to put top on the ball for this stroke.

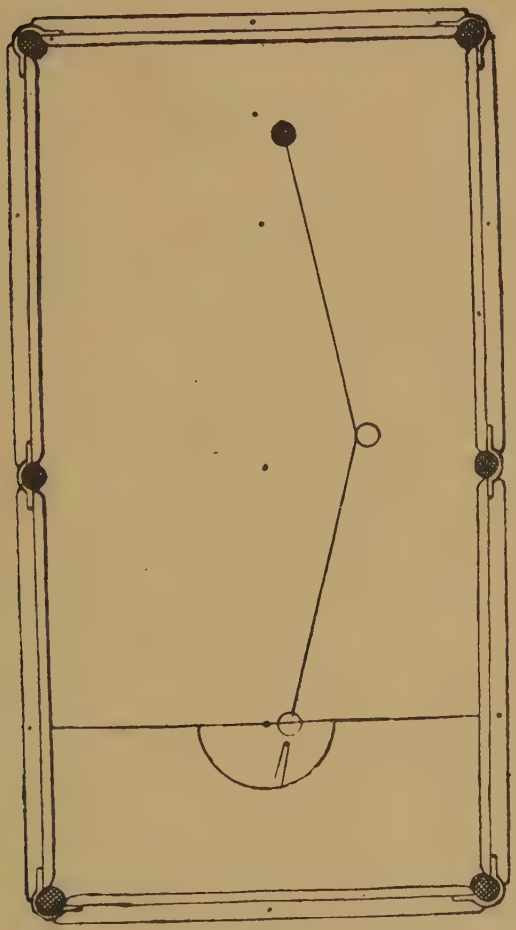


DIAGRAM XVIII.

RED.—15 in. from 4 cushion and 31 in. from 3 cushion.
WHITE.—18½ in. from 5 cushion and 67 in. from 3 cushion.
CUE.—9½ in. from right of D.

held straight and pointed true at the centre of the cue ball, it will be found to be in a direct line with the edge of the first object ball. Not the least use of the constant practice recommended is that it will serve to familiarise the eye with the half-ball angle so that it can be easily recognised in the course of a game.

One of the greatest difficulties a beginner has to contend with is the attainment of the knowledge necessary to enable him to judge correctly where to strike his and the object ball to arrive at a desired result. With a view to putting the learner in the way of doing this, I shall give a series of figures, showing how the balls should be struck for the making of constantly-recurring strokes, and I am confident that if the beginner will but follow the directions, and diligently practise the strokes, he will get into a habit of thinking for himself which will lead to his, in time, applying the proper side and the correct amount of it almost intuitively.

I shall, first of all, deal with cases where the balls are passably close together.

In Figure 1 the distance between balls A and B is five balls, and the distance between balls B and C is three balls. These distances are easily measured. Figure 1 represents a screw shot, to make which it is necessary to strike the cue ball low down and to the right, as shown by the black dot on the ball. The object ball B should be struck in the place indicated by the dot. The stroke should be played slowly.

FIG. 1.

In Figure 2 the red ball C is moved up in the direction of the arrow (Figure 1), the diameter of one

Fig. 2.

ball, which is easily measured by placing a ball there, and then moving the red to the other side of it. This

is practically the same stroke as the last, the only

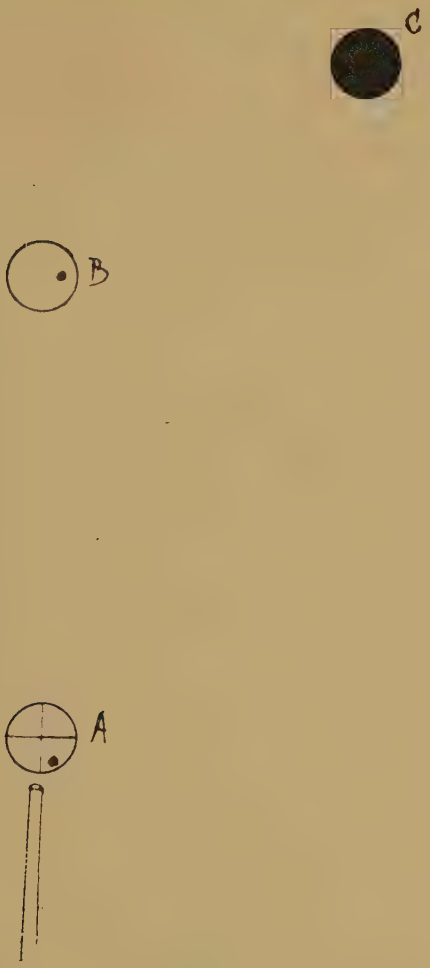


Fig. 3.

difference being that the edge of the object ball B is the point to aim at.

Figure 3 shows a stroke where the object ball C is moved up another ball in the line of the arrow. Here also the cue ball is struck in the same place as before, and the edge of the object ball B is the point to be aimed at, but the cue ball should not be struck so sharply as in the other strokes.

Figure 4 shows the red moved another ball up, being three balls from its first position. In this case, side without screw is required, and the stroke should be played slowly, aiming nearly full on the object ball.

Figure 5 shows the red ball moved another ball up, making a distance of four balls from its original position. In this case it will be seen that no side is required. The object white should be struck fine. In Figure 6 the red is moved a ball's width yet further, making the stroke a follow. The cue ball should be struck above the centre, and the object white in the place indicated by the spot.

Figure 7 is also a follow, the red being six balls distant from its first position. The object ball should be struck a little fuller than in the last stroke.

Figure 8 shows the red moved in so that the white, if struck dead in the centre, can just pass it. This is practically the limits of the following stroke, as if the red ball is any nearer to the path of the white there will not be sufficient room for the ball to pass, and a kiss will result.

FIG. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

FIG. 8.

FIG. 9.

If the learner will practise these strokes until he can do each one every time he tries, he will find that he has made considerable progress.

Perhaps the most important of the many qualifications which go to make a good billiard player is the ability to recognise the half ball, or, as it is generally called, the natural angle, under all circumstances. This is not by any means so easy as may be thought, and one constantly finds even decent amateur players using side for strokes which are in reality but simple natural angle strokes. Professionals, it is true, often use side under similar circumstances, but in their case it is done for the purpose of obtaining after position. It follows, then, that any time which the beginner can devote to training the eye to recognise the natural angle will be most usefully occupied. He must not be discouraged if he finds that he makes poor progress, for facility is only to be obtained by much practice. He will find as he goes on that the ability to judge the natural angle is not only useful in teaching him where to spot his ball when playing from baulk, but it will assist him considerably in playing strokes which are not half ball, inasmuch as by carrying the natural angle in his eye, so to speak, he will be able to judge better whether the angle of the stroke he wishes to play is greater or less than the natural angle, and so get a guide as to the proper compensation to apply. In Figure 9 is shown three balls placed at the natural angle. Let the beginner place

three balls on different parts of the table, endeavouring to place them at the angle shown in the Figure, and then test his placings by trying to make the cannon by playing the half-ball stroke. It must be remembered that, though the balls may be accurately placed, he may miss the stroke by not striking his own ball true, or by his ball not striking the red half ball. It is well here to repeat that in playing a half-ball stroke the line of aim—that is, the centre of the cue—should be through the centre of the cue ball and on to the edge of the object ball. It is, therefore, not at all difficult to take proper aim, for the edge of the object ball presents a definite point to aim at. When fairly proficient at placing the balls in the positions shown in the Figure, it would be well for the beginner to vary the positions by moving first one and then both white balls nearer by degrees to the red, after which the appearance of the angle can be varied by moving the bottom white ball to the right or to the left, and the top white ball an equal distance in a contrary direction. After each move, the test of playing the half-ball cannon should be applied. The learner will not find it at all irksome to practise placing the balls as recommended, and the more time he can devote to it the more likely he will be to become a decent player, for, as before remarked, a very great deal depends in actual play in recognising the natural angle.

A great stumbling-block to beginners is the difficulty incident to knowing where to aim to strike a

Fig. 10.

ball or a cushion in a particular spot. Most, if not all, learners start by aiming at the point they wish the cue ball to strike, and, needless to say, they do not get the stroke they try for. When it is desired to strike an object ball or a cushion in a particular place, the line of aim should pass through a point a half ball distant from the spot on the object ball or the cushion which it is intended that the cue ball shall strike.

The reason for this rule will easily be seen on a consideration of the fact that a ball travels round its centre, and that when the centre is over the point aimed at the circumference of the ball, which is the part which comes into contact with the object, is the distance between the centre and the circumference, or half a ball away. This will, perhaps, be better understood by a reference to Figures 10 and 11.

Figure 10 is designed to show why it is that in striking an object ball "half ball" it is necessary to aim at the edge of the object ball.

Ball 1 is the cue ball, and 1A is the same ball when it reaches the object ball (ball 2). In a half-ball stroke the object ball is struck at the point B and aim is taken at point C. Now D is the centre of the cue ball, and the line of aim—the dotted line from the centre of ball 1 to the point C—passes through this centre, which is, of course, one-half of the diameter of a ball distant from the point B, which it is desired to strike. It follows, therefore, that the

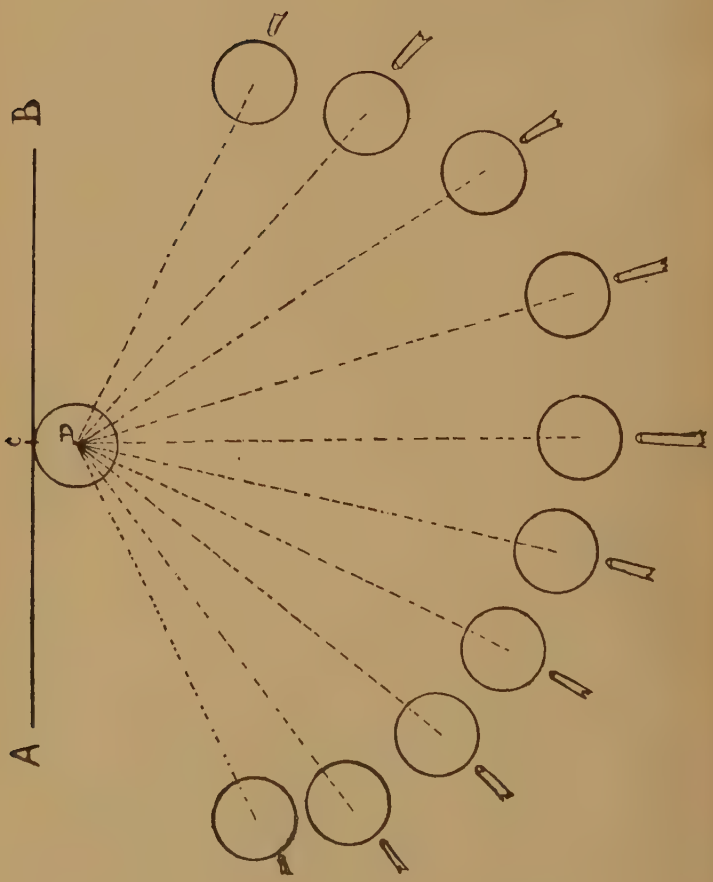


Fig. 11.

same result could be attained by aiming at the point D, but in a half-ball stroke it would be foolish to do so, as it is much easier to aim at the edge of the object ball (point C). This, and when a ball is to be struck quite full, when the centre is aimed at, are the only cases where this simple aim can be got. In other cases it is necessary to aim at the point D, which, with a $2\frac{1}{16}$ ball, would be roughly one inch from the point B. It is not, of course, possible to measure an inch in a game to find the point to aim at, but the learner can do it when he is practising, so as to familiarise his eye to the distance to the end that he will be able to measure it off in an actual game.

To practice then: let the beginner take a point, C (Figure 11), in a cushion (AB). From this point measure one inch, and mark the spot with a piece of tailor's chalk or pipeclay. Now let him place his ball in the positions in which the cue balls are shown in the Diagram and aim at the chalk mark, which is represented on the Diagram by the letter D. He will find that he will have no difficulty whatever in hitting the point C on the cushion. In this practice, a soft stroke should be played, and particular attention should be directed to the angle at which the ball comes off the cushion.

Diagram XIX. shows a very useful exercise in winning hazards. Place the red ball on the centre spot. At a distance of half a ball from the circum-

ference at the point indicated by the letter A in the Diagram make a mark with a piece of tailor's

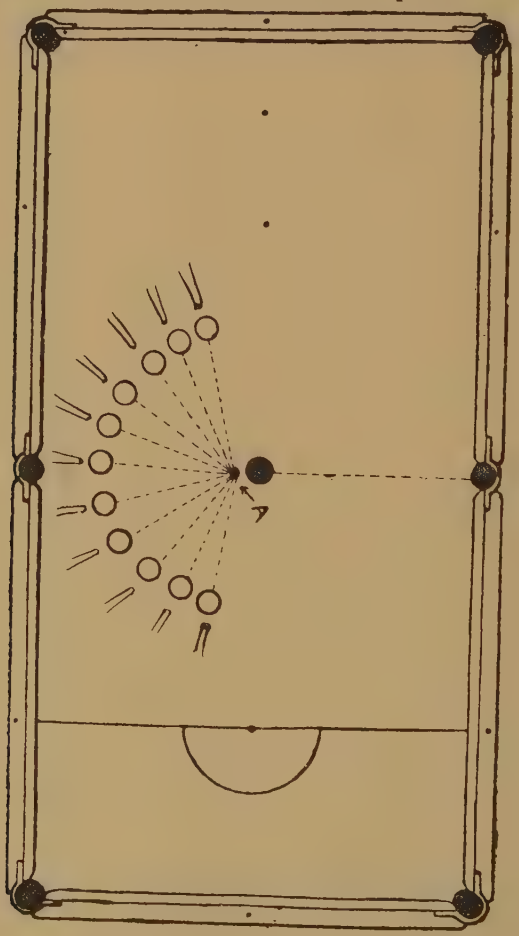


DIAGRAM XIX.

chalk. Now place the cue ball successively in the

positions indicated on the Diagram, commencing from the centre and working alternately right and left, and try to put the red into the middle pocket. As explained by Figure 11 in the last lesson, the point at which aim must be taken is not the point on the ball which is in a direct line with the pocket, which point the cue ball must strike, but the point A, half a ball distant from it, upon which all the dotted lines in the Diagram converge. The learner will find that his best way of taking aim is to point the cue so that a line running down its centre would pass over the chalk mark before alluded to. If this be done, and the cue ball be struck truly, the winning hazard will be a certainty. In all cases of winning hazards it is necessary to remember that the object ball is bound to travel in a direct line with the point at which it is struck, so that the invariable rule for making a winning hazard is to draw a line, with the eye as it were, from the pocket through the ball and a half ball beyond it (point A, Diagram XIX.), and then aim at the point where the line stops. Some difficulty will no doubt be found at first in localising this point with the eye, but if the strokes shown in Diagram XIX. be practised with the aid of the chalk mark, the eye will soon become trained to judge the distance.

In Diagram XX. is shown a half-ball cannon, and the following seven Diagrams show alterations of position caused by moving the cue ball, which

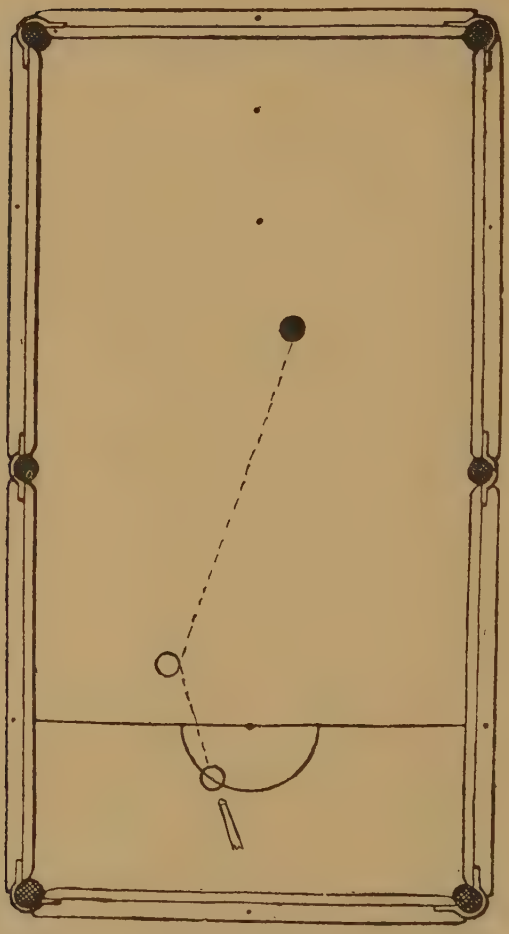


DIAGRAM XX.

RED.—48½ in. from 4 cushion, 29 in. from 5 cushion.
WHITE.—37½ in. from 1 cushion, 21½ in. from 2 cushion.
CUE.—On semicircle behind a spot on the baulk line, 5 in. from the left spot of D.

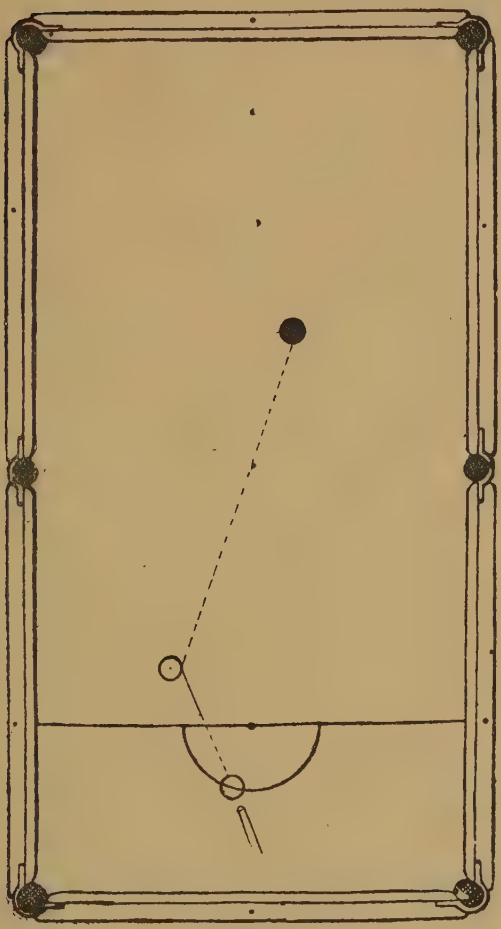


DIAGRAM XXI.

RED and WHITE.—As in 20.

CUE.—On the semicircle behind a spot on the baulk line, 7½ in. from left spot of D. Play half ball on the white with right-hand side.

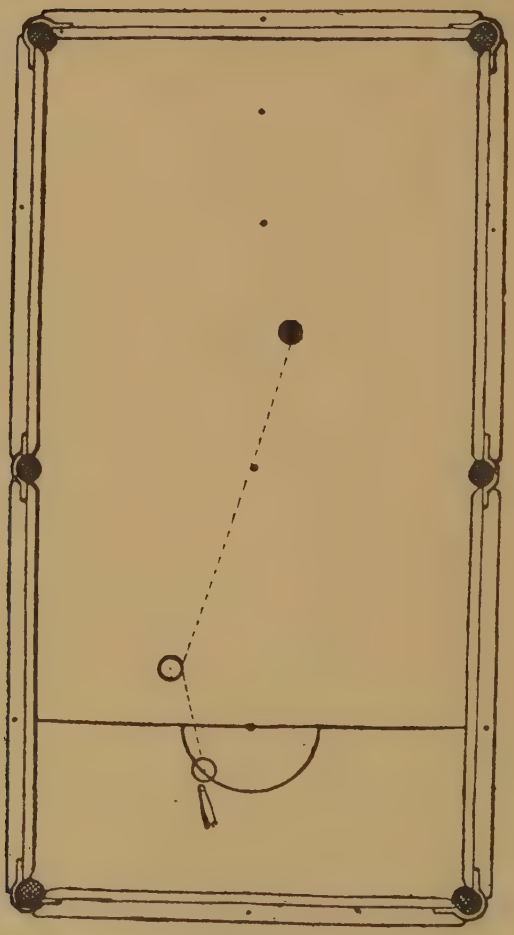


DIAGRAM XXII.

RED and WHITE.—As in 20.

CUE.—On semicircle behind a spot on the baulk line, 3½ in. from the left spot of the D.

Play with left side, half ball on white. If the cue ball is moved an inch to the left the same side should be used, but the white ball should be struck fine.

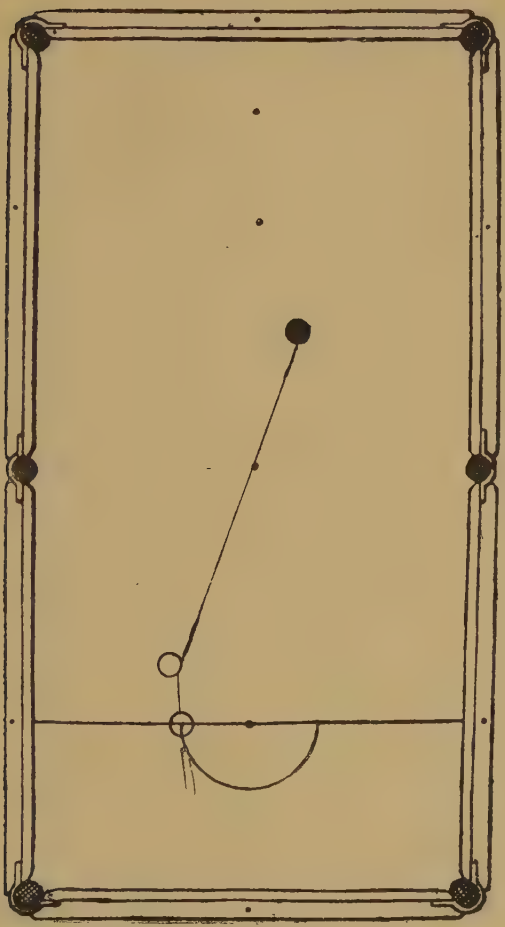


DIAGRAM XXIII.

RED and WHITE.—As in 20.

CUE.—On the left spot of D.

This is a follow. Strike cue above centre and hit white three-quarter ball. This stroke can also be made by a fine stroke without side, but it is more difficult, and would not leave much.

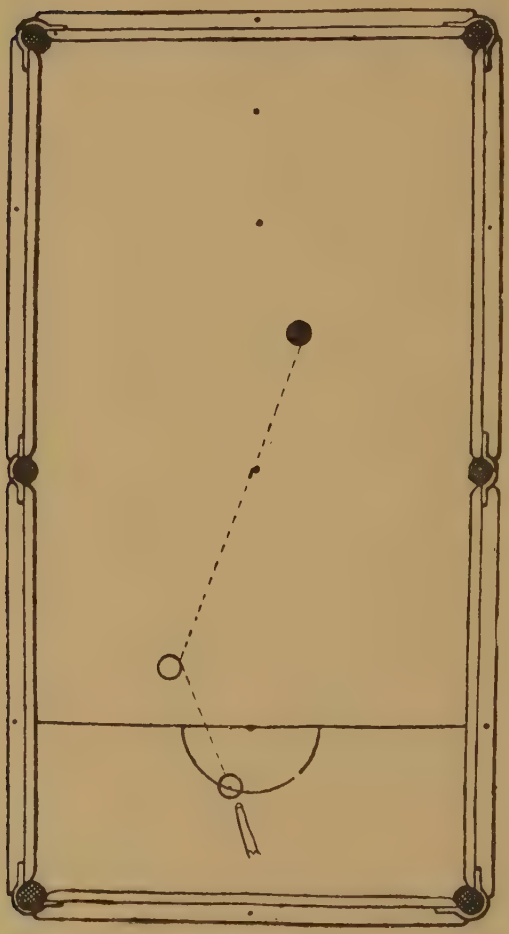


DIAGRAM XXIV.

RED and WHITE.—As in 20.

CUE.—On semicircle behind a spot 8½ in. from left of D.

Play a sharp stroke with a little top on the ball. Half ball on the white.

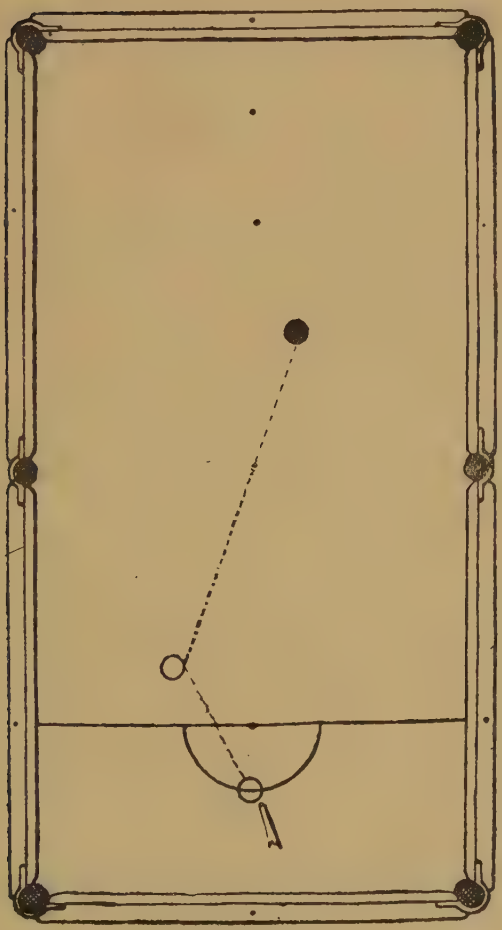


DIAGRAM XXV.

Red and White as in 20.

Cue.—On semicircle behind centre spot.

Right side, below centre. Half ball on white.

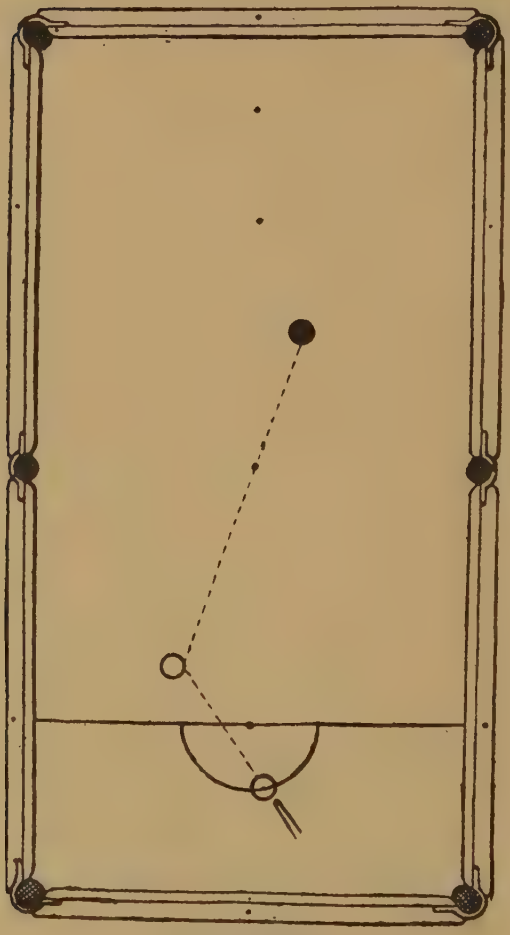


DIAGRAM XXVI.

RED and WHITE as in 20.

CUE.—On semicircle behind a spot on baulk line 2 in. to the right of the centre spot. Strike ball below centre, half ball on white.

DIAGRAM XXVII.
RED on spot.
CUE in jaws of pocket.
Ordinary half ball loser.

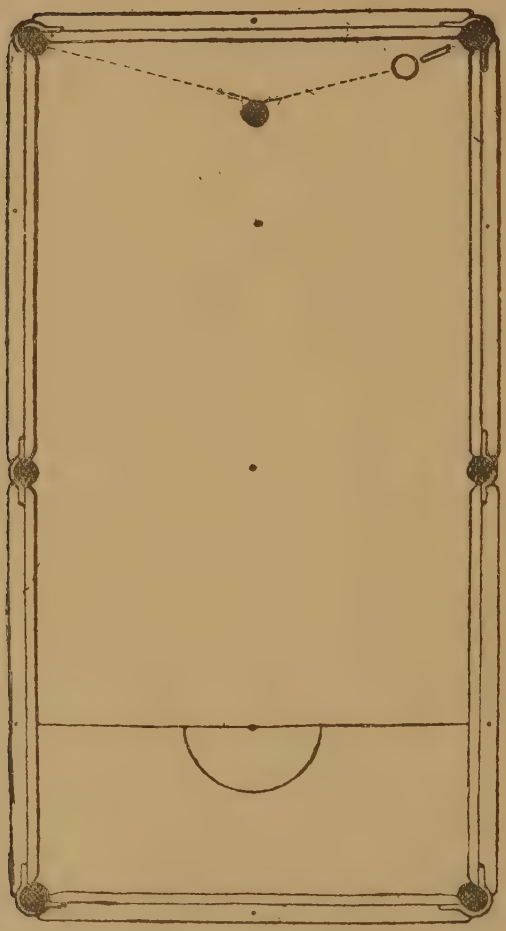


DIAGRAM XXVIII.

RED.—On spot.

CUE.—10 in. from the pocket, in the same line as occupied by the cue ball in Diagram XXVII.

This is still half ball, but it is the limit of the natural angle stroke. Nearer than this, it is necessary either to play fine on the red or to use side.

DIAGRAM XXIX.

Cue ball 15 in. from the pocket, in the same line as before.

Either play on the red slightly finer than half ball, or put left side on the cue ball.

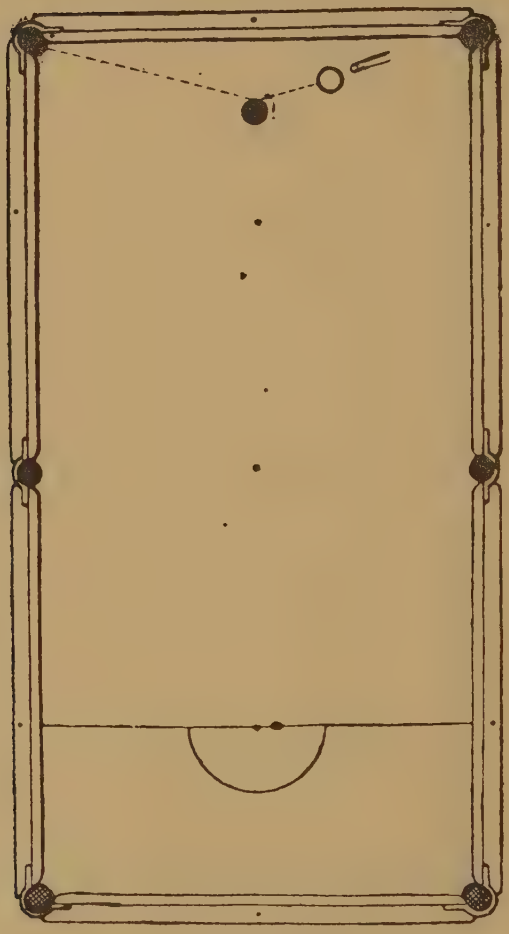


DIAGRAM XXX.

Cue ball 24 in. from the pocket, in same line as before.

Can be played either fine on the red without side, or three-quarter ball on the red with right-hand side.

require the application of compensation for the variation from the natural angle.

A variation, which is not illustrated by Diagram, is to move the cue ball half an inch to the right of the position shown by Diagram XX. Although the difference in the angle may appear very small, it is necessary to put plenty of right-hand side on the cue ball to make the stroke.

Diagram XXVII. shows the ordinary half-ball loser from the top pockets on to the spot, and Diagrams XXVIII., XXIX. and XXX. show other positions with the cue ball moved nearer to the red in the same line.

Diagram XXXI. shows a stroke which constantly recurs, but it can hardly be called a beginner's stroke. To make it the cue ball should be struck top right, and the red should be struck nearly full.

Diagram XXXII. also illustrates a stroke which is almost sure to occur in the course of any ordinary game. It is a slight variation from the half ball, and it should be played with a little right-hand side, aiming half ball at the red.

In Diagram XXXIII. is shown another stroke which is exceedingly common. This must be played with a great deal of right-hand side, aiming rather full on the red. It is worthy of note that this is the furthest point which the cue ball can be moved along the cushion, and the stroke made to keep the red ball out of baulk.

In Diagram XXXIV. the cue ball is nine inches

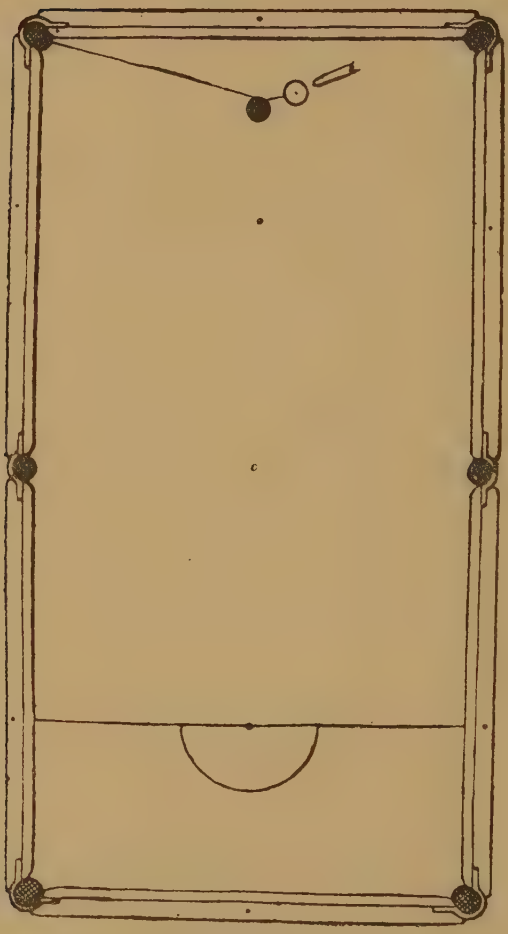


DIAGRAM XXXI.

RED.—On spot.

WHITE.—31 in. from pocket in the half ball line.

Strike the cue ball top right, and the red nearly full.

DIAGRAM XXXII.

RED.—On spot.
WHITE.—2 in. from pocket, and up against the cushion.
Play with a little right-hand side, half ball on the red.

DIAGRAM XXXIII.

RED.—On spot.

WHITE.—4 in. from the pocket, hard up against cushion.

Play with a great deal of right-hand side rather full on the red.

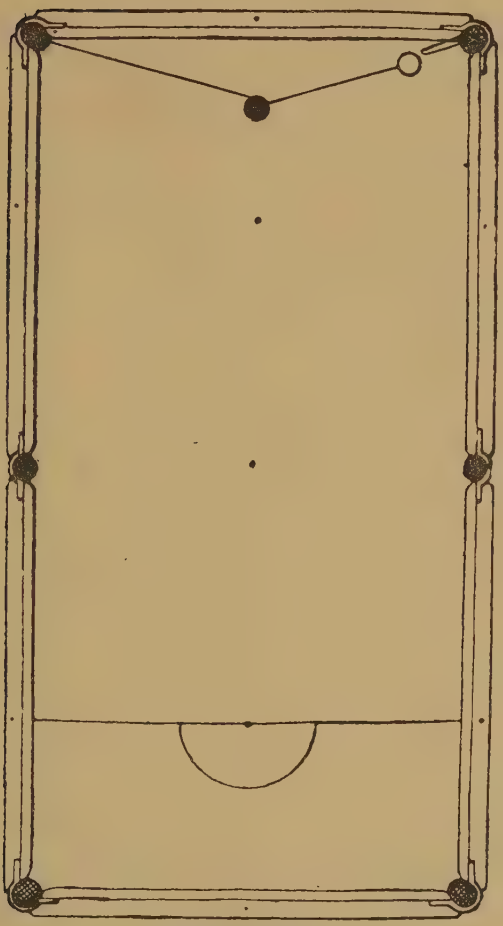


DIAGRAM XXXIV.

RED.—On spot.

WHITE.—9 in. from the pocket, and a ball out from the cushion.

Play with a very little right-hand side a little more than half ball on the red.

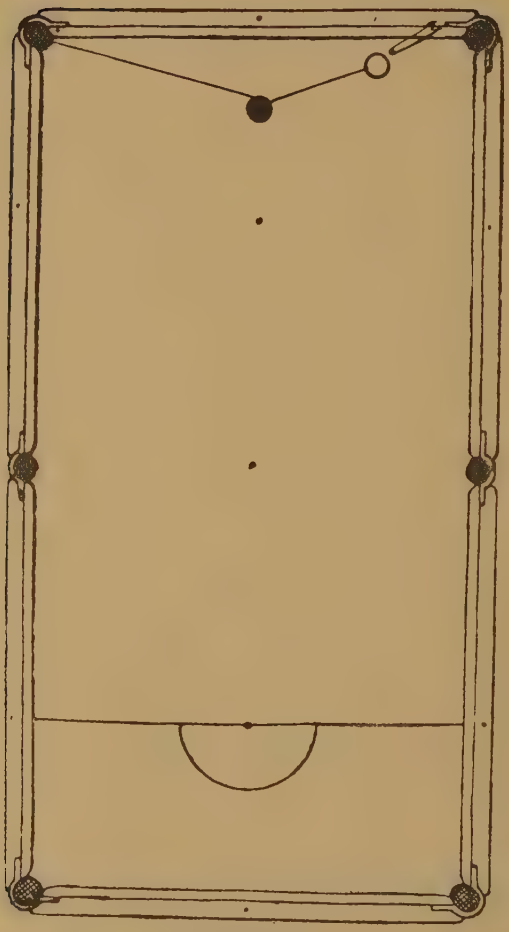


DIAGRAM XXXV.

RED.—On spot.

WHITE.—11 in. from pocket, and a ball out from the cushion. As much right-hand side as possible, three-quarter ball on the red.

from the pocket, and a ball out from the cushion. When the ball is in this position the object should be to make the loser as shown, and bring the red below the middle pocket in position for the loser from baulk. This is done by playing with a very little right-hand side, aiming at the red a little more than half ball.

If the ball is a couple of inches further away from the pocket, as shown in Diagram XXXV., it is necessary to put on as much right-hand side as possible, and to strike the red three-quarter ball.

In Diagram XXXVI. is shown another stroke which may be depended upon to occur many times in an ordinary game. In this case it is necessary to use left-hand side and to strike the red ball fine. As this is not a particularly easy stroke, it should be practised assiduously. It is a stroke which is common as a variation from half ball in many positions, and time used in thoroughly mastering it will not be wasted.

In Diagrams XXXVII. and XXXVIII. the effect of side on a ball propelled against a cushion is shown. In Diagram XXXVII. the point B marks the limit the ball will reach when played with strong left-hand side. Very few amateurs will be able to get enough side on to bring the ball down to this, but it will be found very useful to any player to find where his limit point is. In a similar way, C marks about the limit for the ball when played with

DIAGRAM XXXVI.

RED.—On spot.
WHITE.—9 in. from 5, and 6 in. from 4.
Left-hand side, striking the red ball fine.

right hand or check side, while the point A, of course, marks the natural angle stroke.

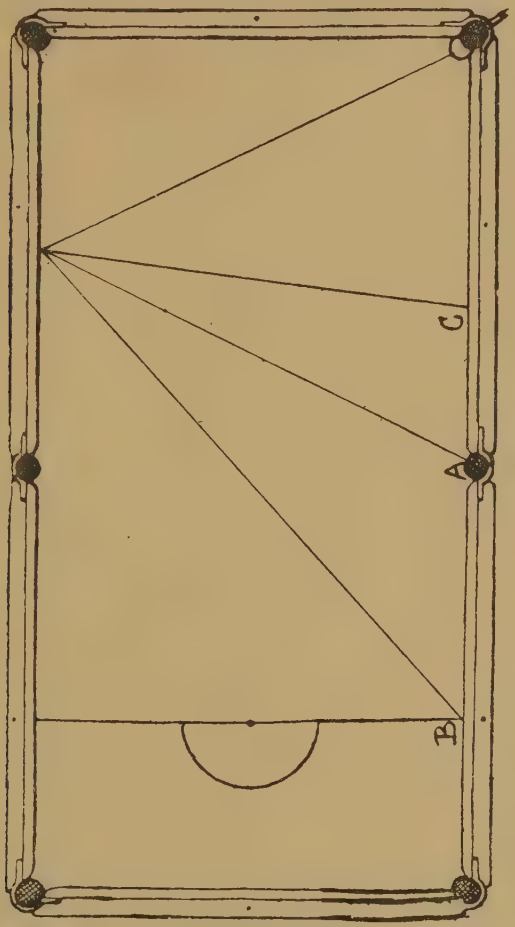


DIAGRAM XXXVII.

In Diagram XXXVIII. the points A and F show

the places to which the ball will travel when struck with extreme right hand or extreme left hand side

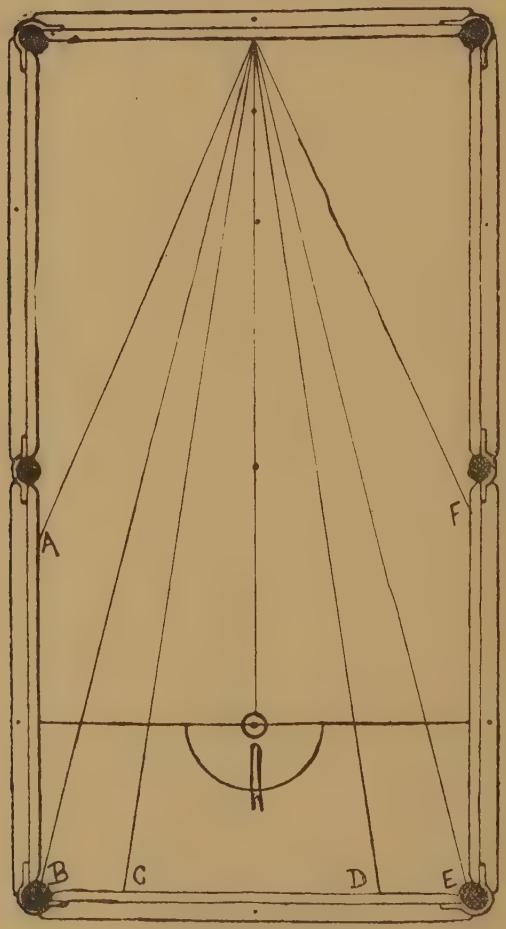


DIAGRAM XXXVIII.

respectively. As before, the amateur will find that

he has some difficulty in getting as far up the table as the situation of these points, but he will find also that it will do him no harm to try. To reach points B and E requires less side, and the points C and D less still. It will be found excellent practice for the player to find out for himself what amount of side he has to put on to bring a ball off the top cushion to any point on the bottom cushion between the points B and E.

A very useful exercise in the half-ball stroke is that shown in Diagram XXXIX. It should be practised into both of the top pockets.

Diagram XL. is also an easy half-ball stroke, which should likewise be practised into each of the two top pockets. Of course, to make the stroke into the other pocket, the cue ball should be placed on the other corner of the D.

Diagram XLI. shows a half-ball stroke which is of very frequent occurrence, and will require more practice than the others, but time given to it will be well spent.

Diagram XLII. shows what is known as a forcing half-ball stroke. In this case the object is to bring the red ball down the table and out of baulk. The way to do this is to play with moderately hard strength, and to strike the cue ball above the centre. It will be seen that the strength carries the cue ball past the white in a curve. If played gently, a cannon on the white would result. This is a stroke which is constantly occurring on all parts of the table,

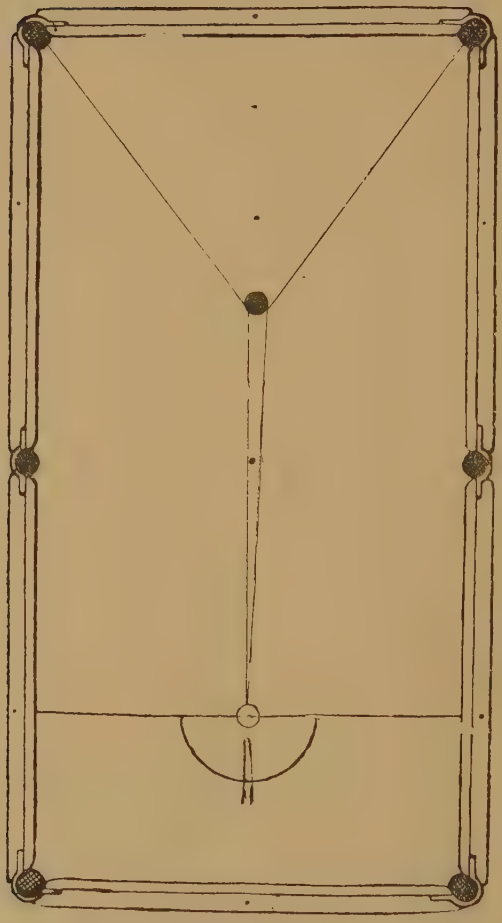


DIAGRAM XXXIX.

RED.—45 in. from top cushion, in the centre line of table.
CUE.—On centre spot of D.

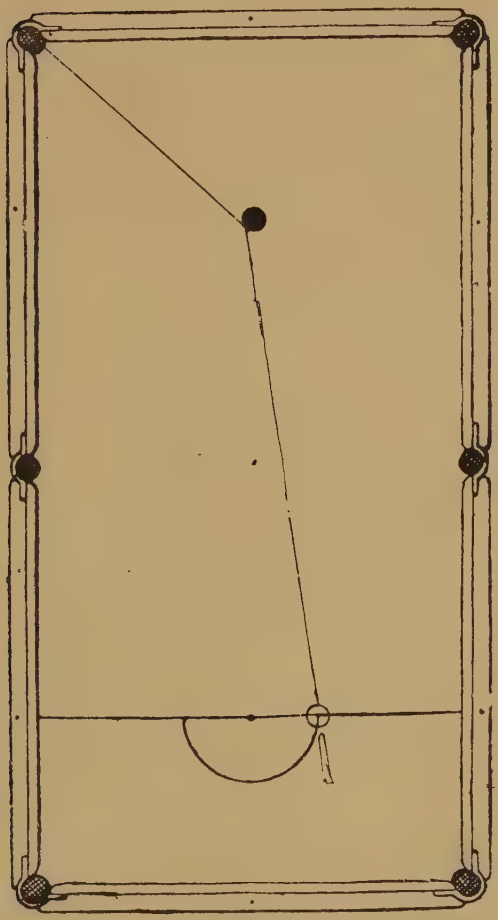


DIAGRAM XL.

RED.—On pyramid spot.
CUE.—On right side of D.

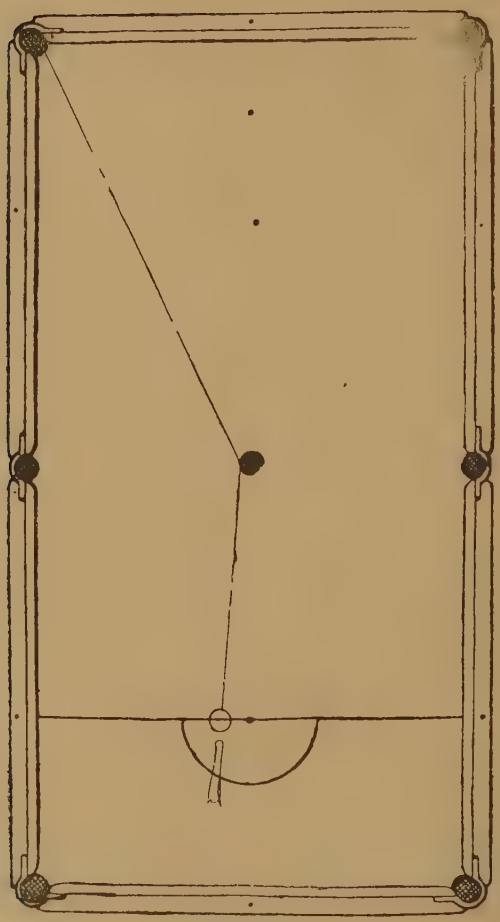


DIAGRAM XLI.

RED.—On centre spot.
CUE.—7 in. from left on baulk line.

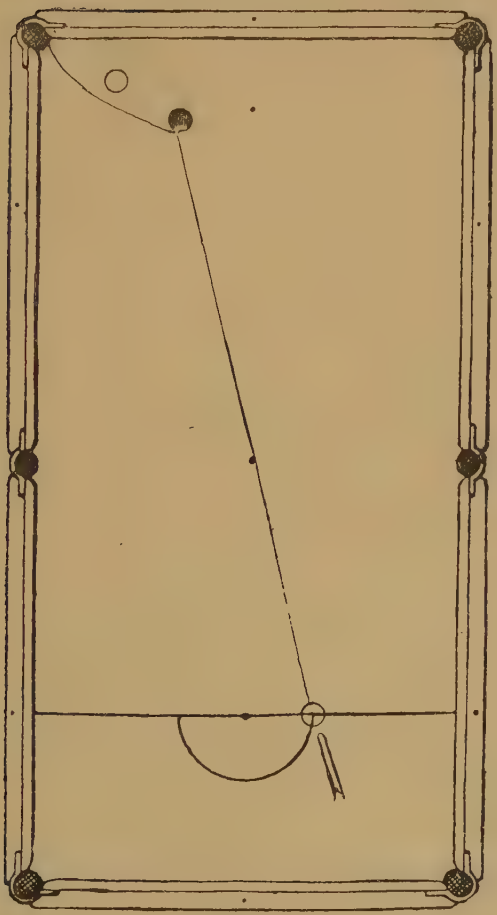


DIAGRAM XLII.

RED.—24 in. from 3 cushion, and 14 in. from 4 cushion.
CUE.—Right-hand spot of D.

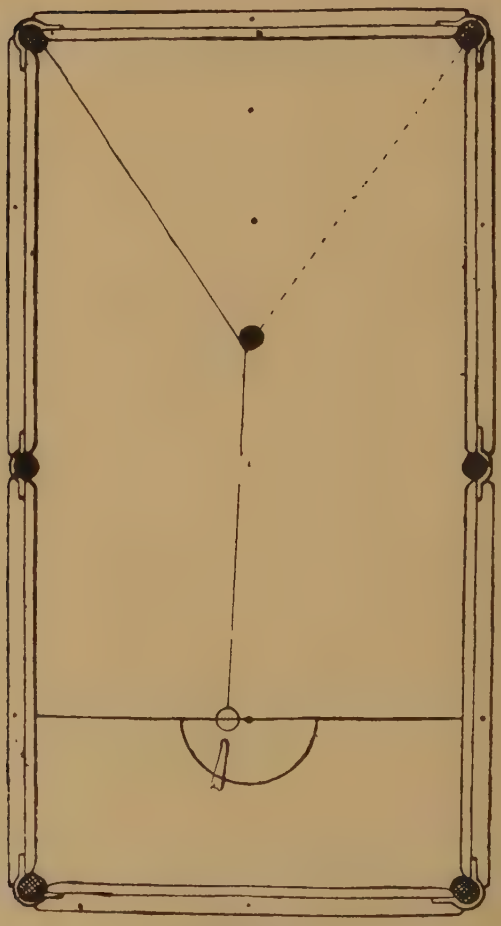


DIAGRAM XLIII.

RED.—Equidistant between pyramid and centre spots on centre line.
CUE.—4 in. to left of centre spot of D.

and it cannot be practised too assiduously, as it will tend to promote freedom of cue. The nearer the red ball is to the cushion the greater will be the strength required.

Diagram XLIII. shows the six stroke, known as the "breeches." This stroke also will repay time devoted to it.

Having mastered the foregoing instructions, and practised the strokes as much as possible, the beginner should take every opportunity of playing with opponents better than himself; and when he finds that he can make breaks of ten or a dozen, he may safely pass on to a larger work on the game.

It should be remembered that a book can only be an auxiliary to practice in acquiring skill at billiards, and that no amount of theoretical knowledge of the manner in which a particular stroke should be made will compensate for lack of skill in hand and eye, which can only be acquired on the actual table.

It will save the learner much discouragement if he is careful to use a straight and well-balanced cue and a set of true balls. The cue should be neither too heavy nor too light—from fifteen to sixteen ounces will be found to suit most people —and it should be well balanced, so that it lies evenly in the hand when held about three inches from the heel of the butt.

It is very difficult to obtain a really good set of ivory balls which will keep true and are of the same size and weight, and, owing to the growing scarcity of ivory, such balls will become more and more expensive. For this reason alone it would be well for the beginner to use Bonzoline Balls, which bid fair to displace ivory altogether in the near future. They can always be depended upon to run true, and are, moreover, very inexpensive, being about a third of the price of a decent set of ivories. I have used them in my matches for some time.

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Date.	Opponent's Name.	Own Total.	Opponent's Total.

SCORES

Date.	Opponent's Name.	Own Total.	Opponen Total.

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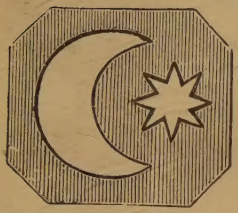

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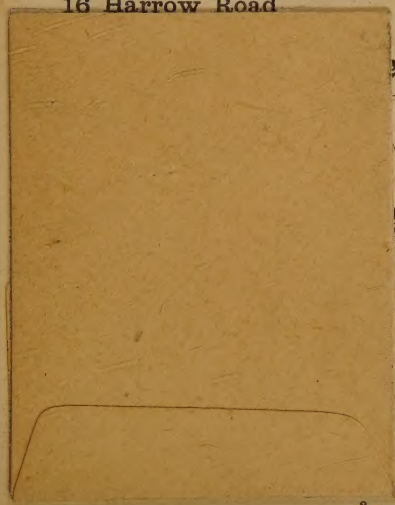

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